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Key to

North American Waterfowl

by STEPHEN R. WYLIE and STEWART S. FURLONG

Illustrated by JACK R. SCHROEDER



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Key to *North American Waterfowl*

by STEPHEN R. WYLIE and STEWART S. FURLONG
Illustrated by JACK R. SCHROEDER

A LIVINGSTON DURABOOKTM

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PREFACE

At the turn of the century the drainage mania which swept the northern Mississippi Valley had not yet reached its full momentum and each spring and fall the great flocks of waterfowl, especially ducks, moved through the area in uncountable numbers. The growing shortage of wetlands, the ducks' breeding grounds, in the prairie states and provinces, makes it unlikely that it will ever again be possible to see such massive flights of waterfowl on this continent. Along with the great numbers of birds went little effective regulation of waterfowl hunting. One could, and some did, hunt as long as the flocks were in the locality. Many hunters took pride in their ability to recognize the different species under almost any weather conditions and some demonstrated it by shooting selected species, or sexes. I knew one man who for many years shot only male canvasbacks and he made few mistakes.

Today, with diminished flocks and decreasing habitat, more and more stringent regulations govern the taking of these fascinating birds. Also, many present day hunters go out only occasionally and do not have the day-to-day observational opportunity to know the different birds as well as their predecessors did.

The success of the concept of species management, biologically sound though it may be, depends almost entirely on the hunter's ability to distinguish between birds on which the season is opened or closed and those that are numerous enough to be legally taken. Adding to the complication is the point system which permits more of some varieties of birds than others to be taken to make up a legal day's limit. Only hunters who have a good knowledge of these birds and of the plumage they wear during the hunting season can take full advantage of these regulations and still remain within the law.

This guide *Key to North American Waterfowl* is an imaginative effort to help the hunter identify all the species of ducks, geese and swans in winter plumage. Printed on waterproof plastic, it has good colored plates, flight silhouettes and a quantity of easily available information for those who would learn to know their waterfowl. It should be in every hunter's pocket before he goes into the marshes.

Ira N. Gabrielson

Honorary President, World Wildlife Fund

INTRODUCTION

Through the years perhaps no other group or family (*Anatidae*) of birds has appealed to man more than the waterfowl. Their esthetic, educational and recreational values have captured the attention of enthusiasts at both the amateur and professional levels. The amount of literature available on waterfowl is quite extensive. Most of this is available only to professional naturalists or ornithologists. Major works are usually difficult to acquire and quite expensive; as a result, their procurement is economically impractical for the amateur. Essentially hunters and bird-watchers comprise the category of amateur enthusiasts and their requirements for reference material are quite different. Since most of their interest lies in field identification, they need a reference which is compact, durable and informative. Primarily this publication is designed and intended for this type of individual.

There are presently 142 recognized species of ducks, geese and swans in the world, 43 of which are found regularly within the confines of the contiguous United States. The scientific classification system employed here is that proposed by Delacour in *The Waterfowl of the World* (1954-64); the common or vernacular names are those most familiar to persons within the previously mentioned boundaries. Each page presents two species of waterfowl accompanied by information pertinent to each. Minimum and maximum measurements pertaining to length and weight are given with both sexes taken into consideration. Flight silhouettes show the form that is most often assumed in flight and notations are given concerning those prominent characteristics that aid in identification. The black silhouettes depict the manner in which each species flushes, either by rising straight-up or by running along the surface. Each species is portrayed in full winter plumage. It was felt that illustrations of eclipse plumage (that plumage resembling the year-round plumage of the female, which the male of certain species acquires during the summer and early autumn) were beyond the scope of this publication.

The basic text is divided into three parts: **Flight Patterns**, **Food Preference** and **Habitat Preference**. The descriptions of flight patterns are those most often observed and are therefore considered the normal behavior. Food preferences are based upon those items which make up the greater

percentage of the bird's diet, while habitat preferences are those locations most often frequented by the particular species.

The remaining feature of each species account is the four color-coded circles which correlate with the map on page 8 and represent the Atlantic, Mississippi, Central and Pacific Flyways. The flyways in this booklet consist only of the areas between the northern and southern boundaries of the United States. Within each circle is found the code letter C, U, R or A. These letters have the following meanings:

C—*common* throughout the entire or most of the flyway

U—*uncommon* throughout the entire or most of the flyway

R—*rare* throughout or usually restricted to a certain area within the flyway

A—*accidental* in any part of the flyway; not within the species' normal range but may wander there on occasion

To the non-hunter, field identification becomes not only a challenge but also a matter of pride. The ability to identify a species by its flight pattern or voice can only come with time and experience. To the hunter, the same principles linked with a basic knowledge of waterfowl have become a necessity. Bag limits which are established by the state and federal game agencies and are based upon population studies require the hunter to know not only **how many** but more importantly, **what** he can take. Good field identification on the part of the hunter is therefore a tool of sound waterfowl management. One of the methods employed by the professional waterfowl biologists in population studies is banding. Thus, another manner in which the hunter can aid the professional is by returning any of the bands that he has taken from birds. These bands can be returned to the authority listed on the band. If this is done, waterfowl biologists will be able to study population dispersions and hunting pressures. Such studies will mean better hunting opportunities in the future.

The authors acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Paul A. Johnsgard of the University of Nebraska in Lincoln who so graciously provided color photographs from which the illustrations for this publication were painted. The authors also thank Mr. Glen Smart of the Patuxent Research Center in Laurel, Maryland who furnished information on population surveys and dispersions.

MAP OF FLYWAYS AND MIGRATION ROUTES



The blue, orange, red and green areas designating the four major flyways are color-coordinated with the four circles adjacent to each species' illustration.

The black arrows show the major migratory paths followed by waterfowl.

white rump patch

FULVOUS TREEDUCK

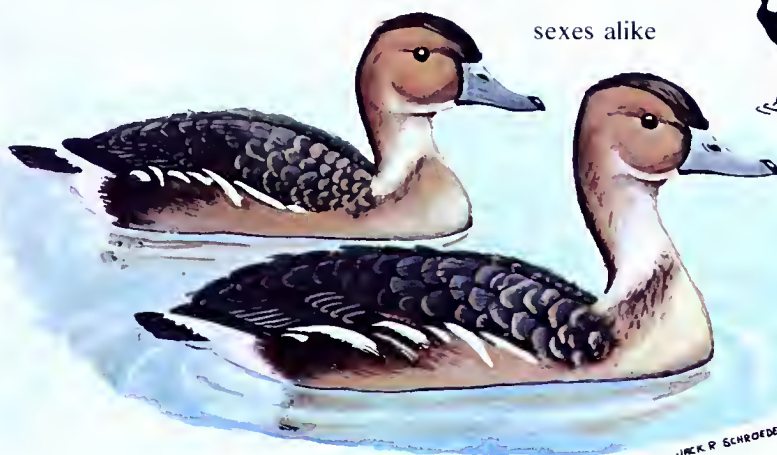
Dendrocygna bicolor

18-21"

1½-1¾ lb.



sexes alike



A

R

R

R

Flight Patterns: wingstrokes rather slow and strong; often flies low and in a line; flushes in staggered numbers; lands by extending the neck downward

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—grains and grasses; nocturnal feeder

Habitat Preferences: irrigated fields; freshwater marshes, ponds, and lakes; restricted to southwestern and southern U.S.

large white wing patch



BLACK-BELLIED TREEDUCK (RED-BILLED TREEDUCK)

Dendrocygna autumnalis

19-22"

Approx. 2 lb.



sexes alike



A

A

R

A

Flight Patterns: similar to Fulvous Tree Duck; often alights on land and then wades into the water

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—corn, grasses, and grains; nocturnal feeder

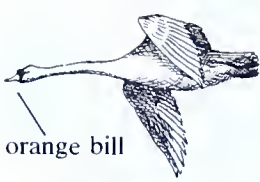
Habitat Preferences: wooded tropical lowlands and cornfields; freshwater marshes, ponds, and lakes; restricted to extreme Southern Texas

MUTE SWAN

Cygnus olor

50-61"

25-30 lb.



orange bill

sexes alike



R

A

A

A

JACK R. SCHROEDER

Flight Patterns: deep and ponderous wingstrokes which produce a melodic tone; flocks travel in irregular lines or V-formation; non-migratory

Food Preferences: primary vegetable matter—aquatic vegetation, grains, and grasses

Habitat Preferences: marshy lakes, lagoons, ponds, and bays; introduced and locally common on Long Island, New York and adjacent vicinities

TRUMPETER SWAN

Cygnus cygnus buccinator

60-72"

20-38 lb.



A

A

R

R

sexes alike



JACK R. SCHROEDER

Flight Patterns: similar to Mute Swan, however, wingstrokes produce a rasping sound; non-migratory

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—aquatic vegetation, grasses, and grains

Habitat Preferences: lakes, large ponds, and rivers; scattered populations in Northwestern U.S.

WHISTLING SWAN

Cygnus columbianus

47-58"

10½-18¾ lb.

U

R

R

U

sexes alike

JACK R. SCHROEDER

Flight Patterns: deep and ponderous wingstrokes; flocks travel in irregular lines or V-formation, however, more swift than other swans

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—aquatic vegetation, grasses, and grains

Habitat Preferences: lakes, bays, large rivers, ponds, and grainfields

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

Anser albifrons

26-34"

3¾-7½ lb.

R

U

C

C

black speckled
belly

sexes alike

JACK R. SCHROEDER

Flight Patterns: wingstrokes are slow and labored; flocks are usually large and often fly in irregular or V-formation

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—grains, grasses, and aquatic vegetation

Habitat Preferences: marshes, ponds, grainfields, lakes, and bays

SNOW GOOSE

Anser caerulescens

26-33"

4¼-10½ lb.

black wing tips



sexes alike

JACK R. SCHROEDER

Flight Patterns: wingstrokes are deep and powerful; usually travel in large flocks that fly fast in irregular lines or V-formation

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—grains, grasses, and aquatic vegetation

Habitat Preferences: grainfields, marshes, lakes, ponds, and bays

U

C

C

C

BLUE GOOSE

Anser caerulescens

25-33"

4¼-6¼ lb.

white head



sexes alike



JACK
SCHROEDER

Flight Patterns: similar to Snow Goose

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—grasses, grains, and aquatic vegetation

Habitat Preferences: grainfields, marshes, ponds, lakes, and bays; often in association with Snow Geese

R

C

C

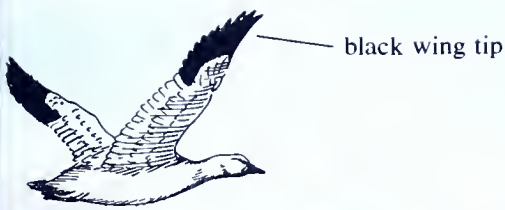
R

ROSS' GOOSE

Anser rossii

21-26"

2¼-3¾ lb.



sexes alike



Flight Patterns: wingstrokes are deep and powerful; usually travels in large flocks that fly fast in irregular lines or V-formation; makes very little noise during flight

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—grass, grains, and aquatic vegetation

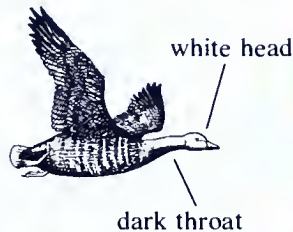
Habitat Preferences: grainfields, marshes, ponds, and lakes; often found in association with Snow Geese; winters almost exclusively in Central California

EMPEROR GOOSE

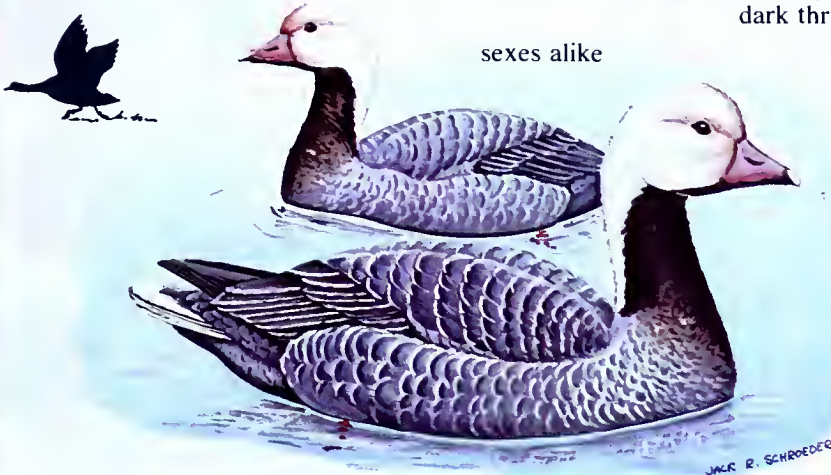
Anser canagicus

26-30"

5-6¾ lb.



sexes alike



Flight Patterns: usually low and swift; wingstrokes are rapid and deep; flocks usually travel abreast in a line

Food Preferences: vegetable and animal matter—various forms of aquatic vegetation and invertebrates

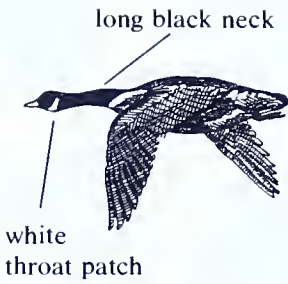
Habitat Preferences: marshes, lagoons, coastal littoral, and bays

CANADA GOOSE

Branta canadensis

22-43"

2½-13½ lb.



sexes alike



JACK R. SCHROEDER

C

C

C

C

Flight Patterns: wingstrokes are deep and powerful; flocks travel in irregular lines or V-formation

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—grains, grasses, and aquatic vegetation

Habitat Preferences: grainfields, marshes, ponds, lakes, rivers, and bays

BARNACLE GOOSE

Branta leucopsis

23-28"

3-4½ lb.



sexes alike



JACK R. SCHROEDER

A

A

A

A

Flight Patterns: wingstrokes fairly short and rapid; flocks travel in compact irregular formation

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—grains, grasses, and aquatic vegetation

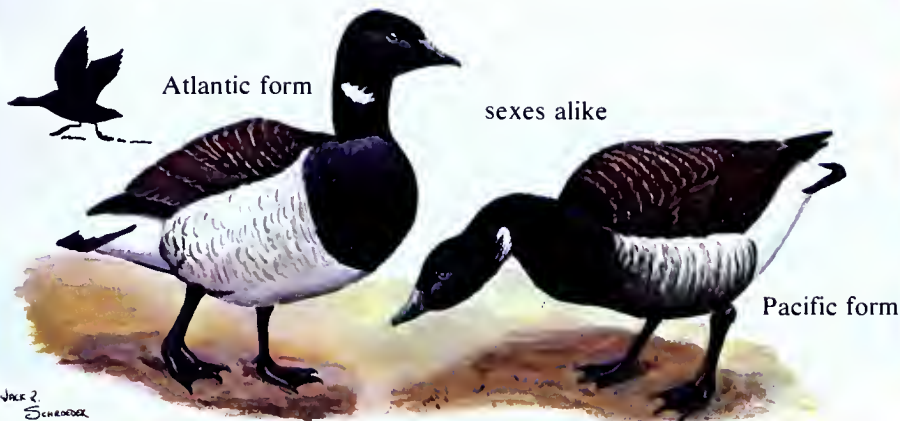
Habitat Preferences: saltwater marshes and mudflats; grass fields; often found in association with Canada Geese

BRANT GOOSE

Branta bernicla

22-26"

2 1/5-3 3/4 lb.



Flight Patterns: swift and direct; wingstrokes are short and rapid; flocks usually fly low in irregular lines

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—eel grass, pondweeds, and other forms of aquatic vegetation

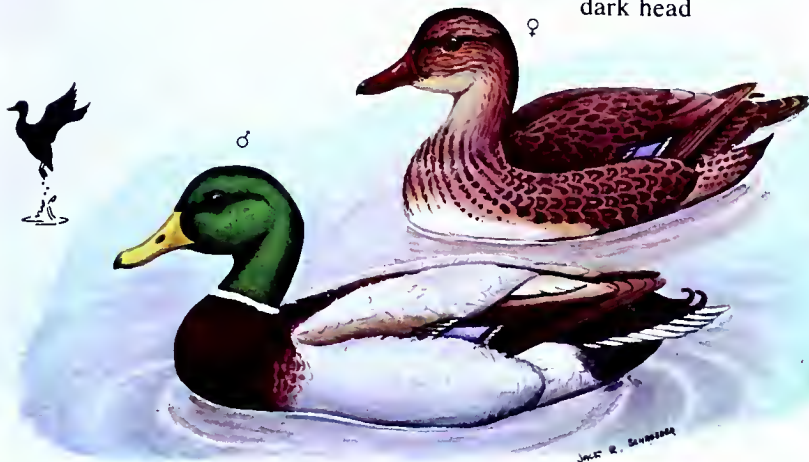
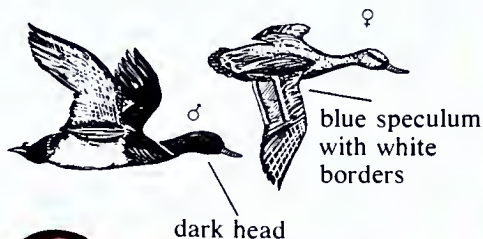
Habitat Preferences: saltwater marshes and bays; tidal areas, ocean

MALLARD

Anas platyrhynchos

20 1/2-26 3/4"

2-3 3/4 lb.

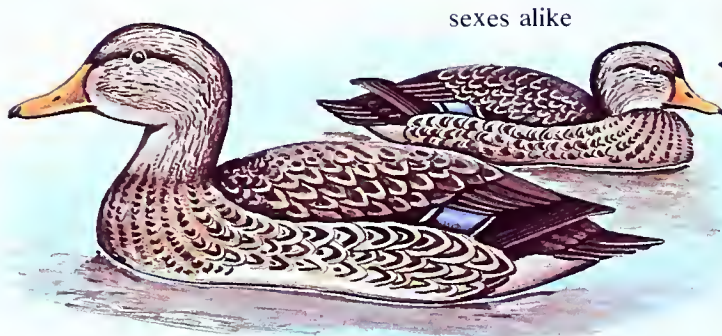
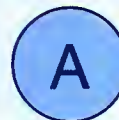
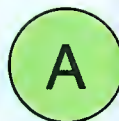


Flight Patterns: strong and direct; flocks often travel in irregular groups or V-formation

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—grains, grasses, and aquatic vegetation

Habitat Preferences: marshes, grainfields, ponds, lakes, rivers, and bays

MEXICAN DUCK *Endangered Species
Anas platyrhynchos diazi
 20-22"
 2-2¾ lb.



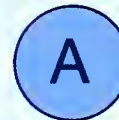
JACK R. SCHROEDER

Flight Patterns: fast and strong; usually found in small flocks; very wary
Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—grasses, grains, and aquatic vegetation
Habitat Preferences: flooded grain and alfalfa fields; swamps, mudflats, ponds, and rivers;
 located in the Upper Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico

FLORIDA DUCK (MOTTLED DUCK)

Anas platyrhynchos fulvigula
 21-26"
 15⁄8-35⁄8 lb.

single white line



JACK R. SCHROEDER

Flight Patterns: swift and direct; flocks are often small and fly in angular lines or V-formation;
 non-migratory
Food Preferences: primarily vegetable along with large amounts of animal matter—aquatic vegetation and invertebrates; grains
Habitat Preferences: marshes, swamps, ponds, lakes, lagoons, and bays; locally common in
 Southern Florida and the Gulf Coast



BLACK DUCK
Anas rubripes
 21-26"
 17½-3¾ lb.

C

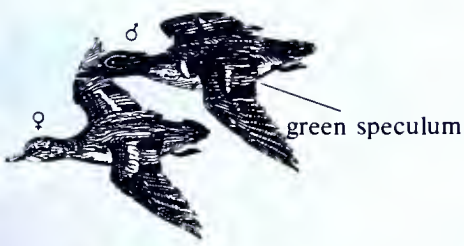
U

R

A



Flight Patterns: swift and direct; flocks are often small and fly in angular lines or V-formation; very wary
Food Preferences: primary vegetable matter—aquatic vegetation, grains, and grasses
Habitat Preferences: saltwater marshes; ponds, lakes, bays, and grainfields



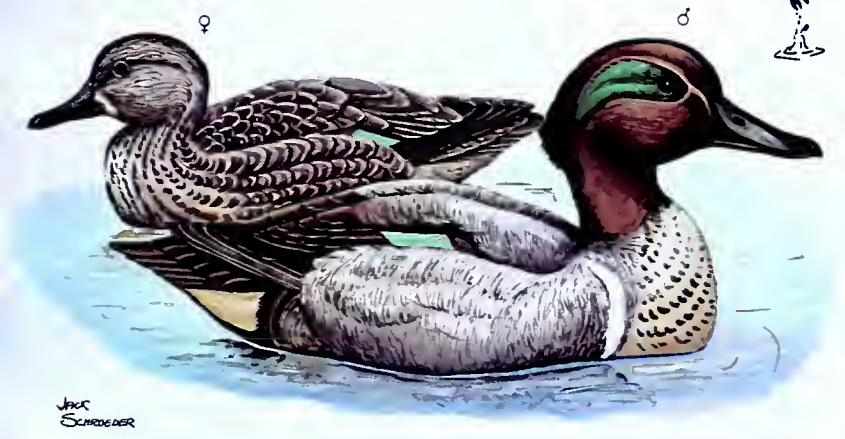
GREEN-WINGED TEAL
Anas crecca carolinensis
 12½-16"
 ½-7/8 lb.

C

C

C

C

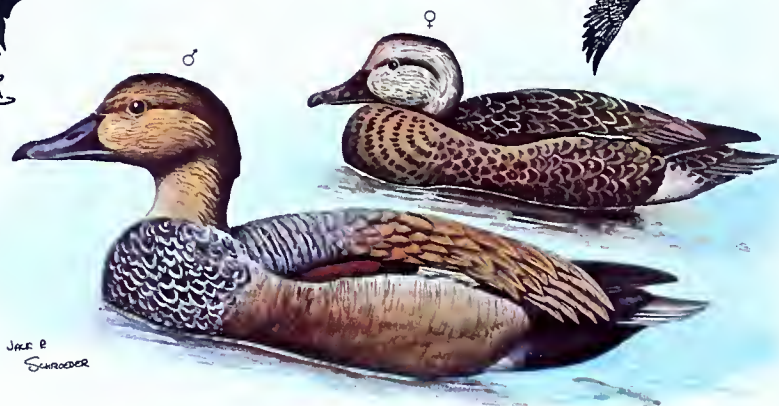
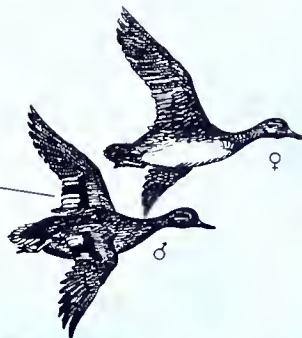


Flight Patterns: swift and erratic with rapid whistling wingstrokes; flocks often fly in compact irregular formation at fairly low heights and maneuver as a unit
Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—aquatic vegetation, grasses, and grains
Habitat Preferences: marshes, ponds, grainfields, lakes, streams, and bays

GADWALL
Anas strepera
 19-23"
 1⅜-2½ lb.



white & black speculum



Flight Patterns: swift and direct; wingstrokes are rapid; flocks fly in small compact groups
Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—pondweeds, sedges, and other forms of aquatic vegetation

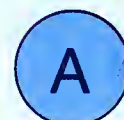
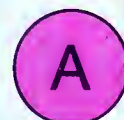
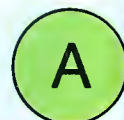
Habitat Preferences: freshwater marshes; ponds, lakes, and rivers

EUROPEAN WIDGEON

Anas penelope
 16½-21"
 1-2 lb.



white shoulder patch



Flight Patterns: swift and erratic; wingstrokes make a rustling sound; flocks are quick to take alarm and fly in irregular lines or blunt wedges

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—various forms of aquatic vegetation

Habitat Preferences: coastal marshes and bays; ponds, lakes, and irrigated fields; often found in association with American Widgeon

AMERICAN WIDGEON (BALDPATE)

Anas americana
18-23"
1-2½ lb.

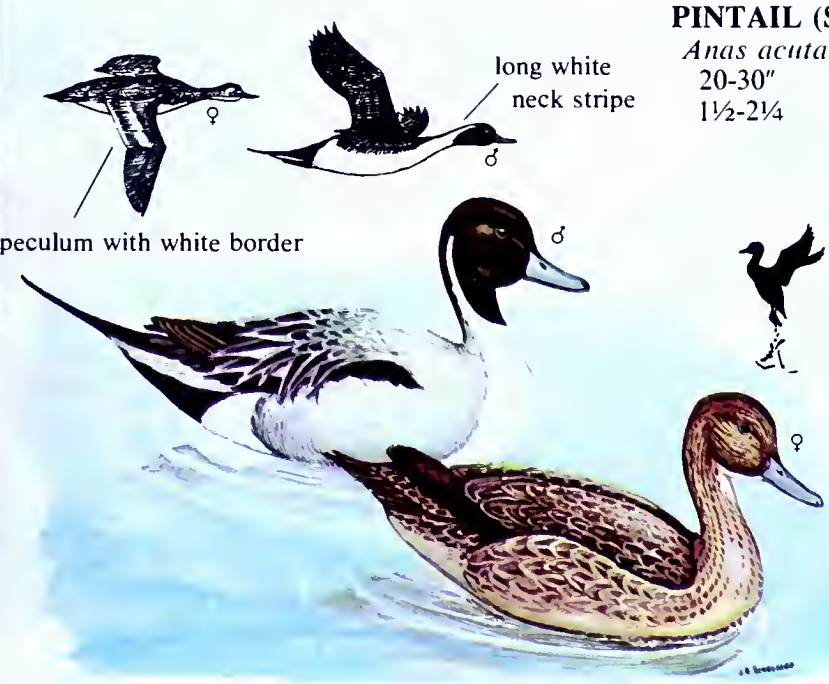


- C
- C
- C
- C

Flight Patterns: swift and erratic; wingstrokes make a rustling sound; flocks are quick to take alarm and fly in irregular lines or blunt wedges
Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—pondweeds, wild celery, and other forms of aquatic vegetation; alfalfa and grains
Habitat Preferences: marshes, ponds, lakes, bays, and grainfields

PINTAIL (SPRIG)

Anas acuta
20-30"
1½-2¼



- C
- C
- C
- C

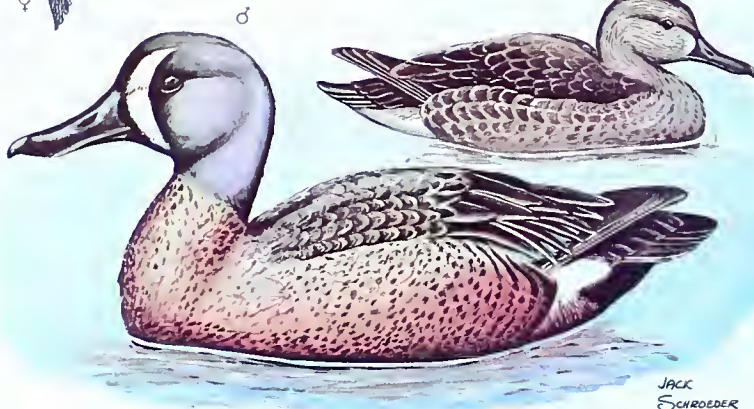
Flight Patterns: fast and graceful; flocks often land by descending from great heights in a zig-zagging motion
Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—aquatic vegetation, grains, and grasses
Habitat Preferences: marshes, grainfields, ponds, lakes, and bays

BLUE-WINGED TEAL

Anas discors

14-16"

¾-1¼ lb.



Flight Patterns: swift and erratic; wingstrokes are rapid; flocks often fly in compact irregular formation at fairly low heights and maneuver as a unit

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—aquatic vegetation, grains, and grasses

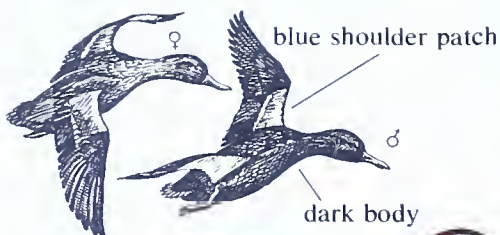
Habitat Preferences: marshes, ponds, mudflats, grainfields, streams, and bays

CINNAMON TEAL

Anas cyanoptera septentrionalium

15-19"

5/8-1½ lb.



Flight Patterns: similar to other Teal, however, usually travels in pairs or small compact flocks

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—various forms of aquatic vegetation

Habitat Preferences: marshes, sloughs, ponds, lakes, and streams; common within its range in Southwestern United States

SHOVELER

Anas clypeata

17-22"

1-1½ lb.



Flight Patterns: slow and direct; usually fly in small and irregularly formed flocks
Food Preferences: primarily vegetable along with large amounts of animal matter—aquatic vegetation and invertebrates
Habitat Preferences: marshes, ponds, sloughs, and mudflats

white back

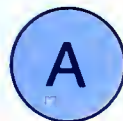
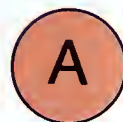


AMERICAN EIDER

Somateria mollissima dresseri

22-28"

3¾-5¾ lb.



Flight Patterns: strong and direct with sluggish and labored wingstrokes; flocks usually fly in a line low over the water
Food Preferences: chiefly animal matter—mollusks, crustaceans, and other forms of aquatic invertebrates
Habitat Preferences: ocean, rocky coasts, and bays



KING EIDER

Somateria spectabilis

19-25"

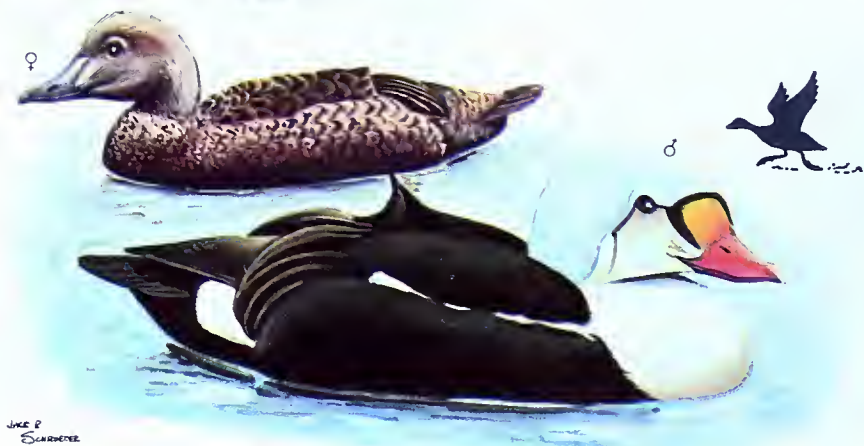
2¾-4½ lb.

R

A

A

A



Flight Patterns: strong and direct with sluggish and labored wingstrokes; flocks usually fly in a line low over the water; also flies over land more readily than American Eider

Food Preferences: chiefly animal matter—various forms of aquatic invertebrates

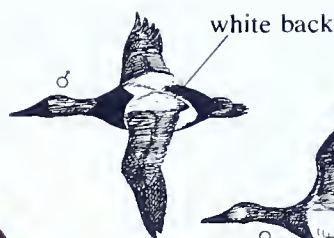
Habitat Preferences: ocean, rocky coasts, bays, large lakes, and rivers; often found in association with American Eiders

CANVASBACK

Aythya valisineria

19-24"

1¾-3¾ lb.

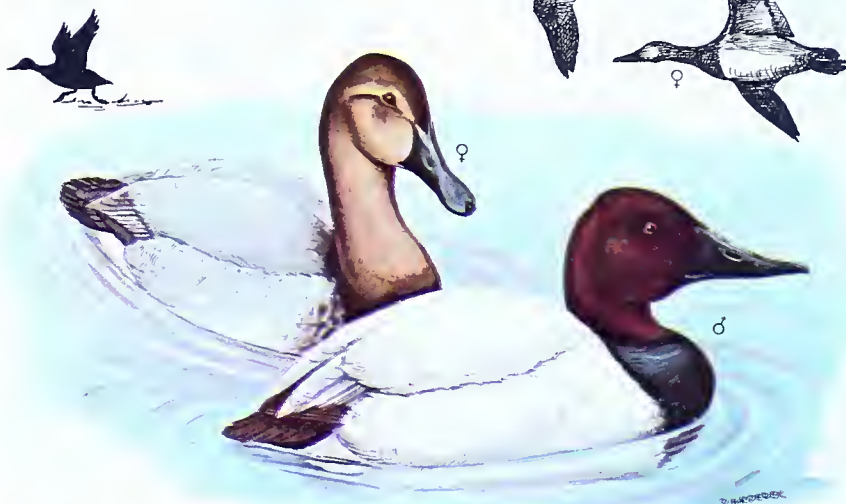


C

U

U

C



Flight Patterns: swift and direct; wingstrokes rapid, powerful, and noisy; flocks fly in irregular and V-formation, often at considerable height

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—wild celery, pondweeds, and other forms of aquatic vegetation

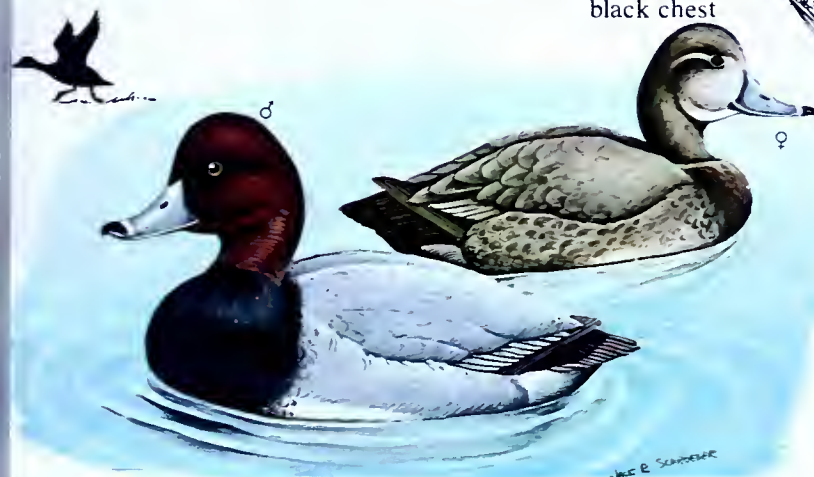
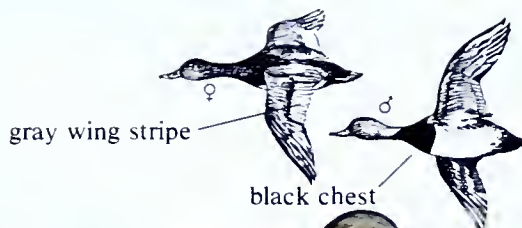
Habitat Preferences: marshes, bays, lakes, and ponds

REDHEAD

Aythya americana

18-22"

1 $\frac{3}{8}$ -3 lb.



Flight Patterns: swift and direct; wingstrokes are rapid; flocks fly in irregular and V-formation and when flushed, rise from the water in a hurried and confused manner

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—wild celery, pondweeds, and other forms of aquatic vegetation

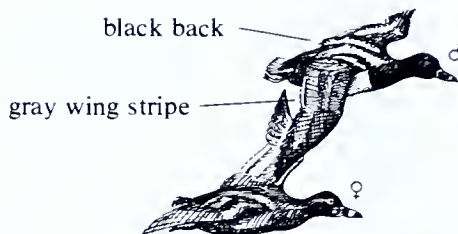
Habitat Preferences: marshes, bays, lakes, and ponds

RING-NECKED DUCK

Aythya collaris

14-18"

1 $\frac{1}{4}$ -2 lb.



Flight Patterns: swift and direct; flocks are small and usually fly erratically in irregular loose formation; often alight without circling

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—pondweeds, grasses, and other forms of aquatic vegetation

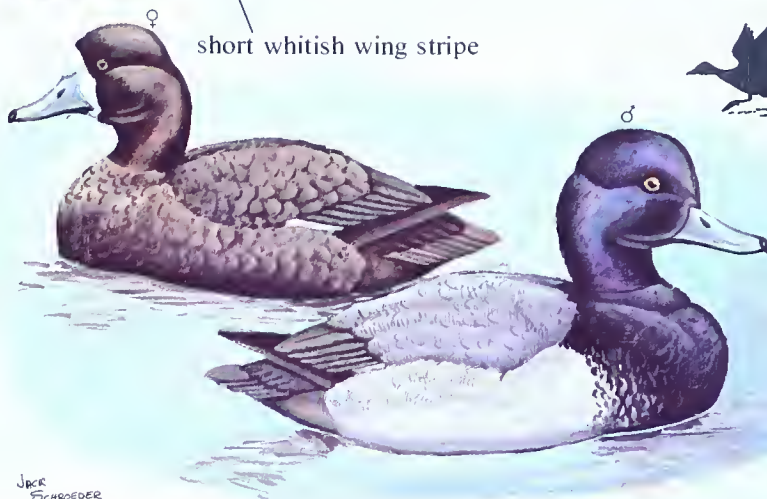
Habitat Preferences: wooded lakes, ponds, marshes, and streams

LESSER SCAUP (BLUEBILL)

Aythya affinis

15-19"

1¼-2¾ lb.



C

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Flight Patterns: swift and erratic; flocks fly in tight formations that frequently twist and turn; migrating flocks fly high

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable along with large amounts of animal matter—aquatic vegetation and invertebrates

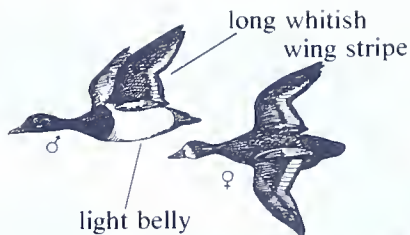
Habitat Preferences: marshes, ponds, rivers, lakes, and bays

GREATER SCAUP (BLUEBILL)

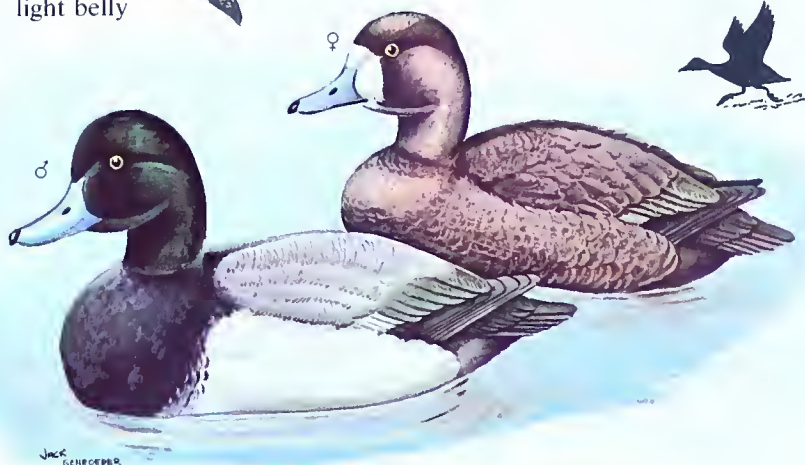
Aythya marila mariloides

15½-20"

1½-3 lb.



light belly



C

U

R

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Flight Patterns: similar to Lesser Scaup, however not as nervous

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable along with large amounts of animal matter—aquatic vegetation and invertebrates

Habitat Preferences: large lakes, rivers, and bays; rather common within its range

WOOD DUCK

Aix sponsa

17-20"

3/4-1 1/8 lb.



Flight Patterns: swift, direct, and very agile; flocks fly low and are usually small and irregularly formed

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—pondweeds, sedges, and other forms of aquatic vegetation; grains and grasses

Habitat Preferences: wooded swamps, marshes, and streams; small lakes and ponds

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER

Melanitta fusca deglandi

19-24"

2 1/8-4 lb.

white wing patch



Flight Patterns: strong and direct with labored wingstrokes; flocks usually fly low over the water in irregular lines or loose formation

Food Preferences: chiefly animal matter—mollusks, crustaceans, and other forms of aquatic invertebrates

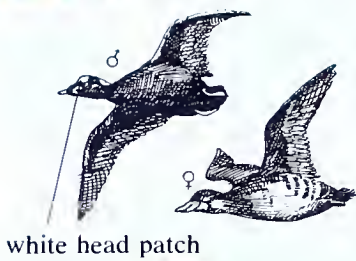
Habitat Preferences: oceans, bays, large lakes, and rivers

SURF SCOTER

Melanitta perspicillata

17-21"

1½-2½ lb.



white head patch



JULIE C.
SCHREEDER

Flight Patterns: strong and direct with labored wingstrokes; flocks usually fly low over the water in irregular lines or loose formation; wingstrokes produce a humming sound
Food Preferences: chiefly animal matter—mollusks, crustaceans, and other forms of aquatic invertebrates

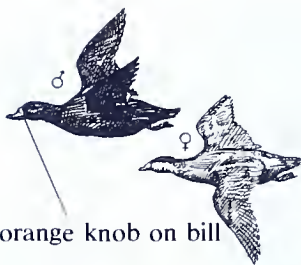
Habitat Preferences: ocean, bays, large lakes, and rivers

AMERICAN SCOTER

Melanitta nigra americana

17-21"

1⅞-2¾ lb.



orange knob on bill



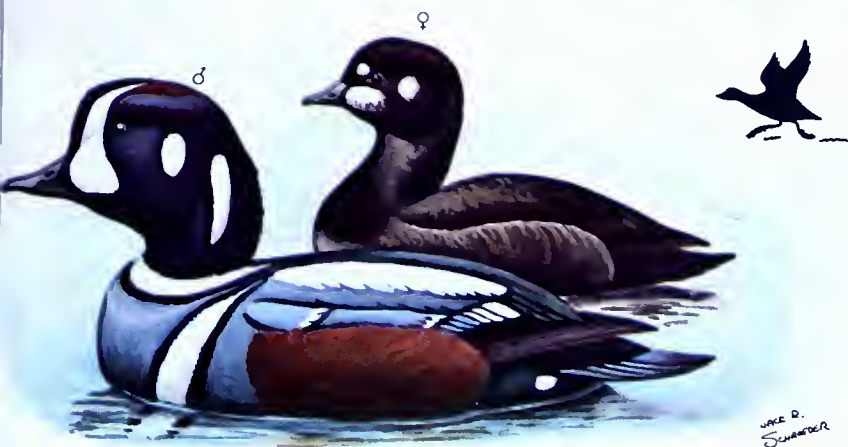
JULIE R.
SCHREEDER

Flight Patterns: strong and swift; wingstrokes produce a whistling sound; flocks often fly low over the water in irregular lines or groups

Food Preferences: chiefly animal matter—mollusks, crustaceans, and other forms of aquatic invertebrates

Habitat Preferences: ocean, bays, large lakes and rivers

HARLEQUIN DUCK
Histrionicus histrionicus
 15-21"
 1-1½ lb.



R

A

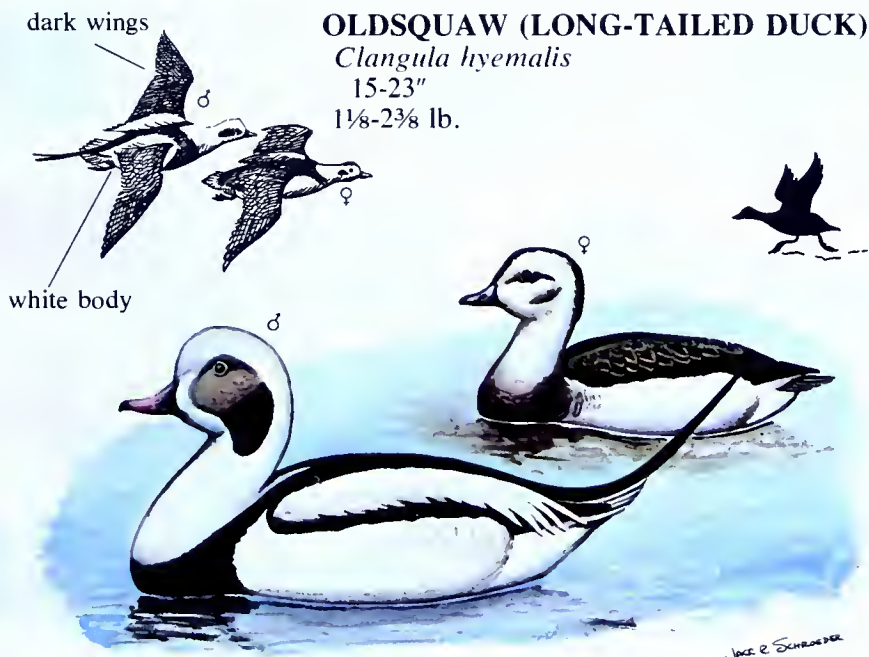
R

R

Flight Patterns: swift and erratic with rapid wingstrokes; often flies in compact flocks low over the water

Food Preferences: chiefly animal matter—crustaceans, mollusks, and other forms of aquatic invertebrates

Habitat Preferences: fast-moving streams; oceans, bays, and rocky coasts



OLDSQUAW (LONG-TAILED DUCK)
Clangula hyemalis
 15-23"
 1½-2¾ lb.

C

U

R

C

Flight Patterns: swift and very erratic; flocks are usually small, irregular in form, and maneuver as a unit low over the water

Food Preferences: chiefly animal matter—crustaceans, mollusks, and other forms of aquatic invertebrates

Habitat Preferences: ocean, bays; large lakes and rivers

AMERICAN GOLDENEYE
Bucephala clangula americana
 16-20"
 1⅜-2⅞ lb.



dark head
 large white wing patches



JACK P. SCHROEDER

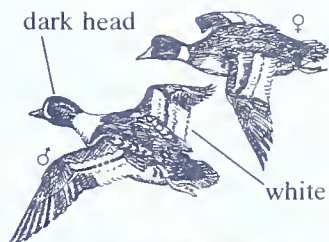
Flight Patterns: swift, strong, and erratic; rapid whistling wingstrokes; flocks are usually small and compact; extremely wary

Food Preferences: primarily animal matter—mollusks, crustaceans, and other forms of aquatic invertebrates

Habitat Preferences: lakes, rivers, bays, and ocean



dark head



white speculum

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE

Bucephala islandica

16-20"
 1⅜-2⅞ lb.



JACK P. SCHROEDER

Flight Patterns: similar to the American Goldeneye

Food Preferences: primarily animal matter—insects, crustaceans, and other forms of aquatic invertebrates

Habitat Preferences: streams, rivers, lakes, and bays; often found in association with American Goldeneye



BUFFLEHEAD

Bucephala albeola

13-16"

¾-1¼ lb.



white wing patch

white head patch



JKE
R. SCHNEIDER



Flight Patterns: swift and direct; rapid wingstrokes; flocks are usually small and low flying
Food Preferences primarily animal matter—insects, crustaceans, and other forms of aquatic invertebrates

Habitat Preferences: lakes, ponds, rivers, and bays

HOODED MERGANSER

Mergus cucullatus

16-19"

1-2 lb.

white wing patch



Flight Patterns: swift and direct with short and rapid wingstrokes; usually found in pairs or small flocks

Food Preferences: chiefly animal matter—fish, crawfish, and other forms of aquatic vertebrates and invertebrates

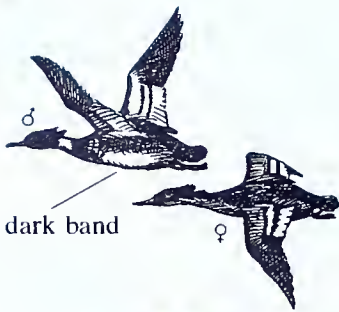
Habitat Preferences: wooded swamps, marshes, lakes, ponds, and streams

RED BREASTED MERGANSER

Mergus serrator

19-26"

1½-2¾ lb.



Flight Patterns: swift and direct; flocks usually fly low over the water in a line or irregular V-formation

Food Preferences: chiefly animal matter—fish, crustaceans, and other forms of aquatic vertebrates and invertebrates

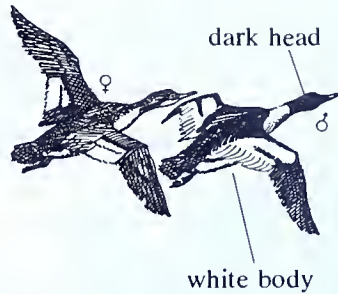
Habitat Preferences: bays, ocean, and lakes

AMERICAN MERGANSER

Mergus merganser americanus

21-27"

1¾-4½ lb.



Flight Patterns: swift and direct; flocks usually fly low over the water in a line or irregular formation

Food Preferences: chiefly animal matter—fish and other forms of aquatic vertebrates and invertebrates

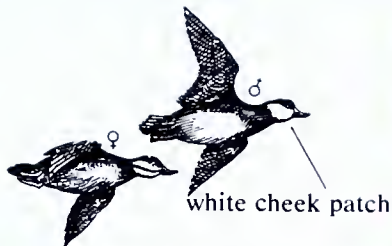
Habitat Preferences: freshwater ponds, lakes, and streams

RUDDY DUCK

Oxyura jamaicensis

14-19"

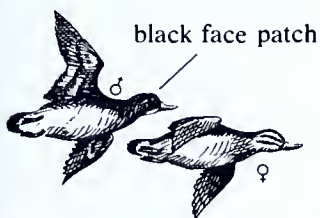
¾-1¾ lb.



Flight Patterns: fast and uneven; short, rapid, and noisy wingstrokes; flocks are usually moderate in size and fly low over the water

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—pondweeds, bulrushes, and other forms of aquatic vegetation

Habitat Preferences: freshwater marshes, lakes, ponds, and rivers

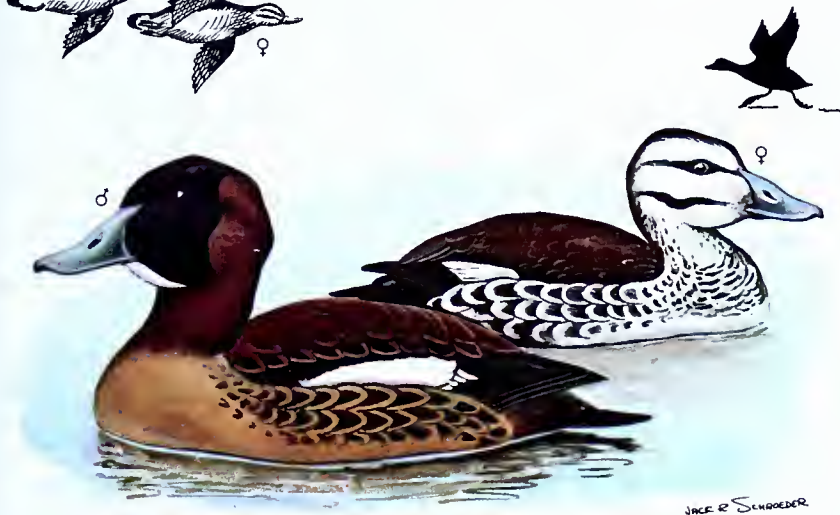
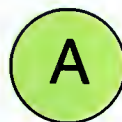


MASKED DUCK

Oxyura dominica

12-14"

½-1½ lb.



Flight Patterns: similar to Ruddy Duck, however, flocks usually consist of pairs or small groups

Food Preferences: primarily vegetable matter—various forms of aquatic vegetation

Habitat Preferences: swamps, marshes, lakes and ponds; casual visitor to the Rio Grande Delta in Texas

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